

The Reading Assessment

The NAEP reading assessment measures students' ability to understand, to interpret, and to think critically about different types of texts. Recognizing that readers vary their approach according to the demands of different types of text, the NAEP framework specifies the assessment of reading in three contexts: reading for literary experience, reading to gain information, and reading to perform a task. (Reading to perform a task is not assessed at Grade 8.) The assessment comprises reading materials selected from publications and other resources typically available to students in and out of school.

Across the three contexts for reading, students are asked to demonstrate their understanding by responding to comprehension questions that reflect four different approaches to understanding text. The NAEP framework accounts for these different approaches by specifying four aspects of reading that represent the types of comprehension questions asked of students. Forming a general understanding questions ask students to consider the text as a whole. Developing an interpretation questions ask students to discern connections and relationships within the text. Making reader/text connections questions ask students to connect information from the text with prior knowledge and experience. Examining content and structure questions ask students to critically evaluate the content, organization, and form of the text. All four aspects of reading are assessed at all three grades within the contexts for reading described above.

The NAEP reading assessment contains multiple-choice questions, as well as short and extended constructed-response questions. Students spend approximately 50 to 60 percent of their assessment time providing written answers to constructed-response questions. For more information regarding the reading assessment framework please visit <http://nagb.org>.

NAEP Reading Framework Distribution of Question Pool Across Contexts

	Grade 8
Reading for Literary Experience	40%
Reading to Gain Informative	40%
Reading to Perform a Task	20%

Reading Booklet Directions

In each of the next two sections, you will have 25 minutes to read a story, an article, or a document and answer questions about it. You should think carefully about your answers, and you should use the entire 25 minutes to complete each section.

You will be asked to respond to three different types of questions. Some of the questions will require you to choose the best answer and fill in the oval for that answer in your booklet.

For other questions, you will be asked to write short answers on the blank lines provided in your booklet. Here is an example of a question that requires you to provide a short answer.

Example 1

Give an example from the article that shows Mandy was not a quitter.

One example is that Mandy's mother didn't want her to umpire in public, but Mandy persuaded her mother to let her.

Also, you may be asked to answer other questions by writing longer, more detailed responses on a full page of blank lines. For example, here is a question that requires you to provide a longer answer.

Example 2

Explain how Mandy's mother and brother helped Mandy to become the first woman umpire.

Mandy's mother helped her by agreeing to let her umpire at a public ball game. Mandy did so well that the team offered her a job as umpire. Mandy's brother helped her by letting her play baseball with him. He also helped Mandy to persuade their mother to let her play in public.

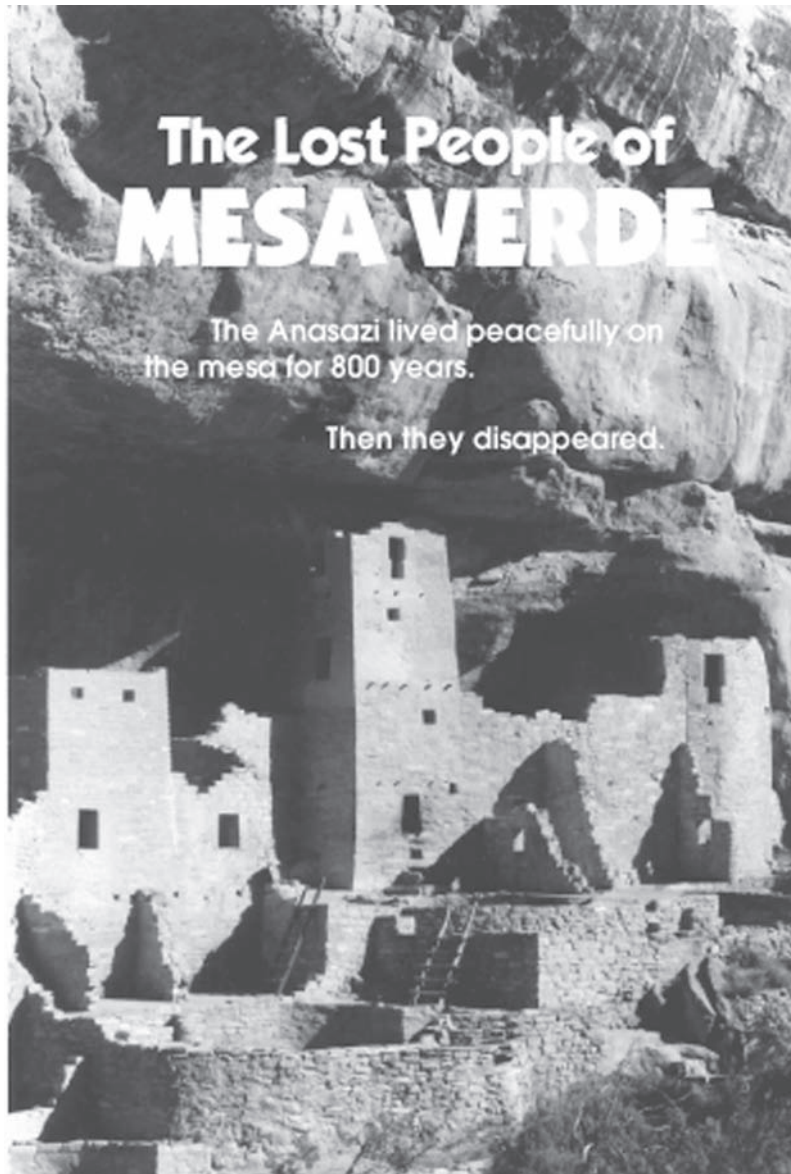
When you are asked to write your response be sure that your handwriting is clear. Think carefully about each question and make your answers as complete as possible, using as many lines as you need.

You may go back to the story, article, or document when answering any of the questions. If you finish before time is called, be sure to read your work again and change anything that you think will make your answers better.



Sample Reading Questions

Grade 8



By Elsa Marston

The Image Bank

In the dry land of southwestern Colorado a beautiful plateau rises. It has so many trees that early Spanish explorers called it Mesa Verde, which means “green table.” For about eight hundred years Native Americans called the Anasazi lived on this mesa. And then they left. Ever since the cliff houses were first discovered a hundred years ago, scientists and historians have wondered why.

Anasazi is a Navajo word meaning “the ancient ones.” When they first settled there, around 500 A. D., the Anasazi lived in alcoves in the walls of the high canyons. Later they moved to the level land on top, where they built houses of stone and mud mortar. As time passed, they constructed more elaborate houses, like apartment buildings, with several families living close together.

The Anasazi made beautiful pottery, turquoise jewelry, fine sashes of woven hair, and baskets woven tightly enough to hold water. They lived by hunting and by growing corn and squash. Their way of life went on peacefully for several hundred years.

Then around 1200 A.D. something strange happened, for which the reasons are not quite clear. Most of the people moved from the level plateau back down into alcoves in the cliffs. The move must have made their

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lives difficult because they had to climb back up to the plateau to do the farming. But it seems the Anasazi planned to stay in the canyon walls, for they soon filled the alcoves with amazing cliff dwellings. “Cliff Palace,” the most famous of these, had more than two hundred rooms.

For all the hard work that went into building these new homes, the Anasazi did not live in them long. By 1300 A.D. the cliff dwellings were empty. Mesa Verde was deserted and remained a ghost country for almost six hundred years. Were the people driven out of their homes by enemies? No sign of attack or fighting, or even the presence of other tribes, has been found.

Archaeologists who have studied the place now believe there are other reasons. Mesa Verde, the beautiful green table, was no longer a good place to live. For one thing, in the second half of the thirteenth century there were long periods of cold, and very little rain fell—or else it came at the wrong time of year. Scientists know this from examining the wood used in the cliff dwellings. The growth rings in trees show good and bad growing seasons. But the people had survived drought and bad weather before, so there must have been another reason.

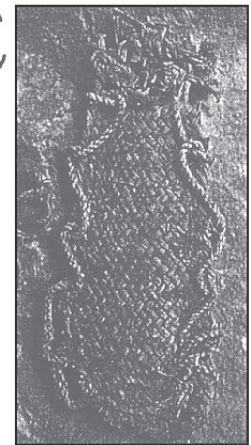


The sturdy baskets, woven sandals, and beautiful pottery left behind by the Anasazi may be 1,000 years old.

As the population grew, more land on the mesa top had to be farmed in order to feed the people. That meant that trees had to be cut to clear the land and also to use for houses and fuel. Without the forests, the rain began to wash away the mesa top.

How do we know about erosion problems that happened about eight hundred years ago? The Anasazi built many low dams across the smaller valleys on the mesa to slow down rain runoff. Even so, good soil washed away, and the people could no longer raise enough food. As the forests dwindled, the animals, already over-hunted, left the mesa for mountainous areas with more trees.

And as the mesa “wore out,” so did the people. It appears that the Anasazi were not healthy. Scientists



Bureau of Land Management -Anasazi Heritage Center Collections

can learn a lot about ancient people’s health by studying the bones and teeth found in burials. The mesa dwellers had arthritis, and their teeth were worn down by the grit in corn meal, a main part of their diet.

As food became scarce, people grew weaker. Not many lived

beyond their twenties. Women died very young, and few babies survived. Living so close together in the cliff houses, where everyone was hungry and worried, the people must have suffered from emotional strain. They probably quarreled often.

In the end the Anasazi must have given up hope that things would get better. Families packed

up and went away. Of course, the “ancient ones” did not simply disappear. They moved south-east to another area and mingled with other peoples. After a while their heritage as the people of the Mesa Verde was forgotten.

In time the trees grew back and the plateau became green once more. But, for the Anasazi it was too late. Although they respected

nature and tried to farm wisely, land that was used too hard could not support them forever.

Yet in their cliff houses and crafts the “ancient ones” left us a superb monument. It is truly one of the most fascinating pictures of America’s past.

WO000822

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WO000823

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1. After reading this article, what do you think is the most important information about the Anasazi?

Their ways of life went on peacefully for several hundreds of years.

(Misspelling and grammar reflect actual student response.)

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WO000824

2. The three moves made by the Anasazi are listed below. Explain the possible reasons that were suggested in the article for each move.

500-1200 A.D. - The Anasazi moved from the alcoves to the top of Mesa Verde.

1200 A.D. - The Anasazi moved back down into the alcoves in the cliffs.

1300 A.D. - The Anasazi left Mesa Verde.

WO000826

3. If you had lived with the Anasazi at Mesa Verde, would you have preferred living on the top of the mesa or in the cliff houses built into the alcoves? Explain your preference by using information from the article.

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WO000827

4. If you could talk to the author of this article, what is one question you could ask her about the Anasazi that is not already answered in the article? Explain why you would want to know this information.

WO000828

5. Which idea from the text about the Anasazi do the photographs support?

- ☒ They were able to create many useful objects.
- ☐ Farming was probably their major source of food.
- ☐ Wood seems to have been their primary building material.
- ☐ Their life became much easier when they moved into the cliff dwellings.

WO000829

6. Imagine that you are living with the people of Mesa Verde during the 1200's when they left the mesa. Some of your friends and neighbors do not want to leave the area. Based on information in the article, what would you tell these people to convince them to leave?

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WO000831

7. The Anasazi's life before 1200 A.D. was portrayed by the author as being

- ☐ Ⓐ dangerous and warlike
- ☐ Ⓑ busy and exciting
- ☐ Ⓒ difficult and dreary
- ☒ Ⓓ productive and peaceful

VB000833

8. The title and photograph on the first page of the article are probably meant to make the disappearance of the Anasazi seem to be

- ☐ Ⓐ a personal tragedy
- ☐ Ⓑ a terrible mistake
- ☒ Ⓒ an unsolved mystery
- ☐ Ⓓ an important political event

WO000832

9. Some people say that the Anasazi's success as a civilization may have actually caused their own decline. Using information in the article, explain why you agree or disagree with this statement.



Student Background Questionnaire

In this section, please tell us about yourself and your family. The section has 13 questions. Mark your answers in your booklet.

VB331330

1. Are you Hispanic or Latino? Fill in **one or more ovals**.

- ☐ Ⓐ No, I am not Hispanic or Latino.
- ☐ Ⓑ Yes, I am Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano.
- ☐ Ⓒ Yes, I am Puerto Rican or Puerto Rican American.
- ☐ Ⓓ Yes, I am Cuban or Cuban American.
- ☐ Ⓔ Yes, I am from some other Hispanic or Latino background.

VB331331

2. Which of the following best describes you? Fill in **one or more ovals**.

- ☐ Ⓐ White
- ☐ Ⓑ Black or African American
- ☐ Ⓒ Asian
- ☐ Ⓓ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ☐ Ⓔ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

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For the rest of the questions in this section, fill in only **one** oval for each question.

VB331333

3. Does your family get a newspaper at least four times a week?

☐ A Yes
☐ B No
☐ C I don't know.

VB331334

4. Does your family get any magazines regularly?

☐ A Yes
☐ B No
☐ C I don't know.

VB331335

5. About how many books are there in your home?

☐ A Few (0–10)
☐ B Enough to fill one shelf (11–25)
☐ C Enough to fill one bookcase (26–100)
☐ D Enough to fill several bookcases (more than 100)

VB331336

6. Is there a computer at home that you use?

☐ A Yes
☐ B No

VB331337

7. Is there an encyclopedia in your home? It could be a set of books, or it could be on the computer.

☐ A Yes
☐ B No
☐ C I don't know.

TB001101

8. About how many pages a day do you have to read in school and for homework?

☐ A 5 or fewer
☐ B 6–10
☐ C 11–15
☐ D 16–20
☐ E More than 20

VB331339

9. How often do you talk about things you have studied in school with someone in your family?

☐ A Never or hardly ever
☐ B Once every few weeks
☐ C About once a week
☐ D Two or three times a week
☐ E Every day

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VB331447

10. How many days were you absent from school in the last month?

- Ⓐ None
- Ⓑ 1 or 2 days
- Ⓒ 3 or 4 days
- Ⓓ 5 to 10 days
- Ⓔ More than 10 days

VB331451

13. How often do people in your home talk to each other in a language other than English?

- Ⓐ Never
- Ⓑ Once in a while
- Ⓒ About half of the time
- Ⓓ All or most of the time

VB330870

11. How far in school did your mother go?

- Ⓐ She did not finish high school.
- Ⓑ She graduated from high school.
- Ⓒ She had some education after high school.
- Ⓓ She graduated from college.
- Ⓔ I don't know.

VB330871

12. How far in school did your father go?

- Ⓐ He did not finish high school.
- Ⓑ He graduated from high school.
- Ⓒ He had some education after high school.
- Ⓓ He graduated from college.
- Ⓔ I don't know.



Student Background Questionnaire

Reading—Grade 8

This section has 13 questions. Mark your answers in your booklet. Fill in only **one** oval for each question.

VB345622

1. Please indicate how much you DISAGREE or AGREE with the following statements about reading and writing. Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. When I read books, I learn a lot.	<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)	<input type="radio"/> (D)
b. Reading is one of my favorite activities.	<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)	<input type="radio"/> (D)
c. Writing things like stories or letters is one of my favorite activities.	<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)	<input type="radio"/> (D)
d. Writing helps me share my ideas.	<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)	<input type="radio"/> (D)

VB379288

2. How often do you do each of the following? Fill in **one** oval on each line..

	Never or hardly ever	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Almost every day
a. Read for fun on your own time	<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)	<input type="radio"/> (D)
b. Talk with your friends or family about something you have read	<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)	<input type="radio"/> (D)
c. Write e-mails to your friends or family	<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)	<input type="radio"/> (D)

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VB345628

3. NOT including reading that you do for school, how often do you spend time reading each of the following types of **fiction**? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Never or hardly ever	A few times a year	Once or twice a month	At least once a week
a. Comic books or joke books	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D
b. Fiction books or stories (books or stories about imagined events)	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D
c. Plays	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D
d. Poems	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D

VB345657

4. NOT including reading that you do for school, how often do you spend time reading each of the following types of **non-fiction**? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Never or hardly ever	A few times a year	Once or twice a month	At least once a week
a. Biographies or autobiographies	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D
b. Books about science (for example, nature, animals, astronomy)	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D
c. Books about technology (for example, machines, computers)	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D
d. Books about other countries	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D
e. Books about history	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D
f. Other non-fiction books	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D



VB345640

5. NOT including reading that you do for school, how often do you spend time reading each of the following types of **articles or stories**? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Never or hardly ever	A few times a year	Once or twice a month	At least once a week
a. Articles or stories in a newspaper	<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)	<input type="radio"/> (D)
b. Articles or stories in a magazine	<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)	<input type="radio"/> (D)
c. Articles or stories on the Internet	<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)	<input type="radio"/> (D)

VB345644

6. Now think about reading and writing you do for school. For your **English** class this year, how often do you do each of the following? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Never or hardly ever	A few times a year	Once or twice a month	At least once a week
a. Have a class discussion about something that the whole class has read	<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)	<input type="radio"/> (D)
b. Work in pairs or small groups to talk about something that you have read	<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)	<input type="radio"/> (D)
c. Write in a journal about something that you have read for English class	<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)	<input type="radio"/> (D)

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VB345648

7. For your **English** class so far this year, how many times have you done each of the following? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Never	Once	2 or 3 times	4 or 5 times	6 or more times
a. Written a report or paper about something that you have read (for example, a book report)	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
b. Made a presentation to the class about something that you have read	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
c. Done a project about something that you have read (for example, written a play, created a web site)	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)

VB345652

8. Think about the classes that you are taking this year. How often do you read something that is **NOT** a textbook for each of the following classes? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Never or hardly ever	A few times a year	Once or twice a month	At least once a week	I don't take this class
a. English class (for example, plays, fiction books)	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
b. Science class (for example, science magazines, biographies of scientists)	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
c. Social studies or history class (for example, books about people who lived a long time ago, real letters written a long time ago)	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
d. Math class (for example, math word-games)	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)

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VB345715

9. For school this year, how often have you been asked to write long answers to questions on tests or assignments that involved reading?

- ☐ Ⓐ Never
- ☐ Ⓑ Once or twice this year
- ☐ Ⓒ Once or twice a month
- ☐ Ⓓ At least once a week

VB429520

10. When you have reading assignments in school, how often does your teacher do each of the following? Fill in **one** oval on each line.

	Never or hardly ever	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Almost every day
a. Ask you to explain or support your understanding of what you have read	<input type="radio"/> Ⓐ	<input type="radio"/> Ⓑ	<input type="radio"/> Ⓒ	<input type="radio"/> Ⓓ
b. Ask you to discuss different interpretations of what you have read	<input type="radio"/> Ⓐ	<input type="radio"/> Ⓑ	<input type="radio"/> Ⓒ	<input type="radio"/> Ⓓ

VB595182

11. How hard was this test compared to most other tests you have taken this year in school?

- ☐ Ⓐ Easier than other tests
- ☐ Ⓑ About as hard as other tests
- ☐ Ⓒ Harder than other tests
- ☐ Ⓓ Much harder than other tests

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VC034559

12. How hard did you try on this test compared to how hard you tried on most other tests you have taken this year in school?

- Ⓐ Not as hard as on other tests
- Ⓑ About as hard as on other tests
- Ⓒ Harder than on other tests
- Ⓓ Much harder than on other tests

VB595184

13. How important was it to you to do well on this test?

- Ⓐ Not very important
- Ⓑ Somewhat important
- Ⓒ Important
- Ⓓ Very important

